

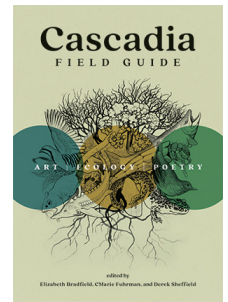
Cascadia Field Guide: Art, Ecology, Poetry

Elizabeth Bradfield, CMarie Fuhrman, Derek Sheffield

ISBN: 978-1-68051-622-7

[Mountaineers Books](#), 2023

www.cascadiaguide.com



Cascadia Critters Preschool/Kindergarten

Young children learn about some of the beings who live in Cascadia and roleplay being that animal in its environment.

- Time required: 15-30 minutes
- Photographs or drawings of animals from Cascadia
- Setting: Outdoors

Background

Young children (and adults!) can often recognize animals who live far from our region and those that they may never see in the wild, such as Lion, Zebra, Polar Bear, or Flamingo. But what about those that are equally fascinating but live closer to home, like Banana Slug, Steller's Jay, Salmon, Mountain Goat, or Marmot?

Connecting to place and caring for the land starts with knowing more about who and what lives there and all their interconnections. Young children love to imagine and role play and, in this activity, they develop a deeper connection to Cascadia by becoming a Cascadia Critter.

Preparation

- Choose 4-6 animals from the *Cascadia Field Guide* to focus on and role play. Read about their natural history including their habitat, features, and behaviours that young children can imitate (such as how they move or sounds they make).
- Make copies of artwork or photographs of the animals.

Procedure

1. Go outdoors in the community, schoolyard, nearby park, or green space.
2. Show children the images of the Cascadia Critters and ask what they already know about them and if they've seen them before. As a group, share where these "critters" live, what they eat, what sounds they make, and how they move.
3. Then assign or have the children choose one of the Cascadia Critters they will be transformed into. Role play the transformation into their new identity. (Grow your tail! Show me your feathers! Show me how you slither! Sing your song! etc)
4. Allow for free play and exploration as a Cascadia Critter. Guide exploration with questions or tasks, such as "Now it is time to" ...
 - o find a place to shelter or hide
 - o find your food
 - o find your family / others of your kind
 - o interact with a different animal than you

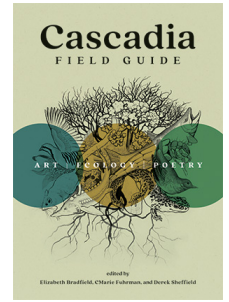
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- build your home
5. When the play time is up, role play transforming back into a human.
 6. Wrap up with a discussion of what it felt like to become a Cascadia Critter and what you learned about its life.

by Stephanie Weinstein, Environmental Educator based in Lkwungen territory in Victoria, BC, Canada